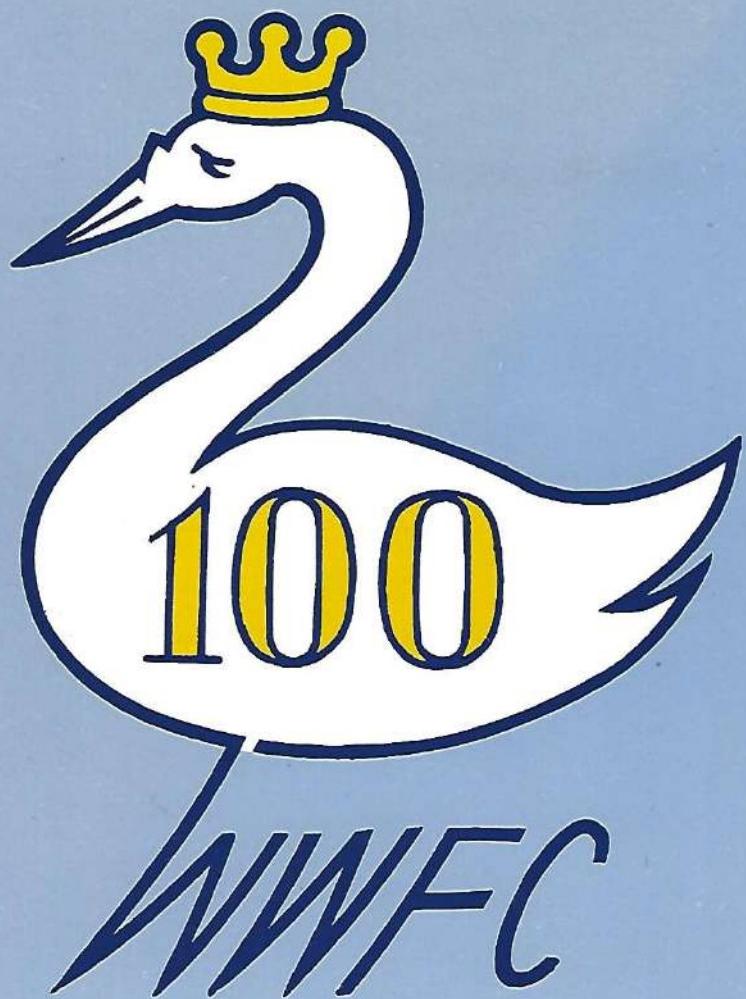


CENTENARY

1884–1984



A History of
Wycombe Wanderers
Football Club

**1884-1984
100th ANNIVERSARY
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FOOTBALL CLUB**



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FOREWORD

By SIR STANLEY ROUS,
C.B.E.



High Wycombe is well known for its industry and schools but its reputation during a hundred years has been enhanced by its football club—The Wycombe Wanderers F.C. In its long life the club has contributed much to the town and also to the history of the game and has been a valued member of The Football Association and the Berks & Bucks County F.A.

No doubt the highlights of the club's history will be recorded in this handbook. From my many visits and close connections with the club over the years, first as a referee, then as Secretary of The Football Association and now as a spectator, I recall its successes in the Isthmian League Championship which they won several times, the last being in 1982-83, in the F.A. Amateur Cup as well as some exciting F.A. Cup runs. Wycombe Wanderers toured many parts of the world and produced several amateur international players. The club is now a credit to the present non-league football structure.

Wycombe Wanderers F.C. have played on their ground—Loakes Park—since 1895, by permission of Lord Carrington at that time. In 1947 Loakes Park was given to them by one of their oldest and most distinguished players, Frank Adams, whose death occurred in 1981. His memorial service was held in the Parish Church; it might quite rightly have been held at Loakes Park, a shrine where he played and latterly attended regularly. The ground has been well-known for its sloping surface. Opponents wrongly claim that it is worth a two goal lead!

Wycombe Wanderers had other distinguished officials who have administered the club wisely and soundly. The visitors have always enjoyed the welcome and hospitality extended to them. Many will remember the large assembly in the town hall on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary and I am sure the members are all looking forward to the centenary celebrations.

I congratulate Mr. Brian Lee and his energetic committee on their hard work and dedication and wish them and Wycombe Wanderers F.C. continued success and prosperity in the unforeseeable future of football.

Stanley Rous



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THE CHAIRMAN WRITES . . .

The celebration of a Centenary in any context is a remarkable milestone in the life of an organisation and Wycombe Wanderers has a history of which it can be justifiably proud.

I have been privileged to be involved in only the last few years but these years have seen some dramatic changes. They have merged in modern day society and, no doubt, there are many more to come, which makes this book even more important. The introduction of television, the increase in leisure time and shorter working week, floodlit football, the ease of travel for tours, the abolishment of the amateur status and fewer people watching the game. Through all these changes though it has been our forefathers who had the vision and set the standards at Loakes Park. They have proved themselves to be a band of men whose dedication and enthusiasm has carried the Club to its present celebration.

Wycombe Wanderers has been a name to conjure with in the football world for over a century. The preparation of this history has necessitated a tremendous amount of research and is so well documented in the following pages, we owe Stephen Daglish a debt of gratitude for the task he has undertaken so well.

The past merely sets the stage for the future. The Club has an enviable past but as long as there are games to be played, home or abroad, further honours to be won, we shall be around.

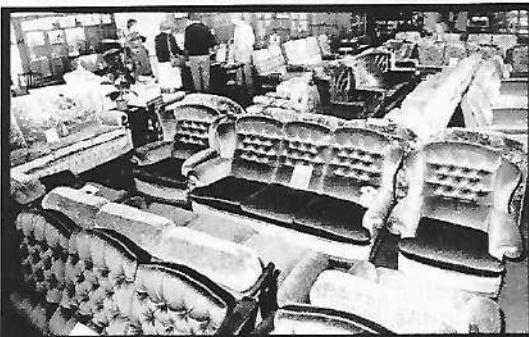
I further hope that you enjoy the history, that it revives memories and stirs enthusiasm for the future. Soccer is a wonderful game of opportunities, to play, to travel, to make friends, we have been set an excellent example.

BRIAN LEE.

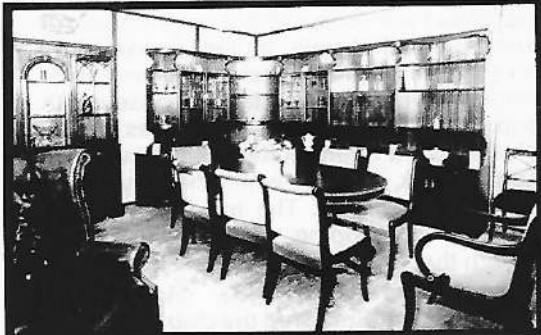
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INTRODUCTION

Before the formation of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club, there had been several attempts to establish a football team in the town. Football had been flourishing in the town since 1863 on the Rye Mead, while Marlow—only seven miles away—had been represented at the inaugural meeting of the F.A. Cup in 1871 and had reached the Semi-Finals in 1882.

It is thought that the inspiration for the name of the club came from the original Wanderers, five times winners of the F.A. Cup, who had visited the town in December, 1877. The occasion was a Second Round F.A. Cup match against the old High Wycombe club. The match was played on the Rye on the same day that Queen Victoria visited the town, and the Cup holders soundly thrashed the local team by nine goals to nil.

The Rye at this time was not the Rye we know today, but a boggy pasture used by the dairymen of the town for grazing their cows. The animals made the entrance deep in mud where they entered in the morning and left in the afternoon to return for milking and feeding to the cowsheds in different parts of the town. At this time there was an unwritten law governing the right to a pitch on the Rye. Goalposts must be put up immediately after the Parish Church clock chimed midnight on the Friday night prior to the game. Rivalry was intense and it was not uncommon to find goalposts uprooted and thrown in the Dyke.

The game of football, too, was very different to the modern game. The F.A. Cup had not reached popularity and the system of playing home and away fixtures in a league competition had not been established—indeed the Football League did not come into being until 1888. The pitch markings would be unfamiliar to the modern reader. These had been intro-

duced in 1882 but only to mark the four boundaries. A half way line was then added, not only for kick-offs but also to mark the extent to which a goalkeeper could handle the ball. Incredibly the 'keeper was confined to handling the ball only within his own penalty area as late as 1912. By 1887 there was a centre circle, and two six-yard semi-circles in front of each goal from which goal kicks were taken. The penalty kick was introduced in 1890 and a line 12 yards from the goal line was added. Originally a penalty kick could be taken from anywhere on this line and the goalkeeper could advance up to six yards from his goal line. It was not until 1902 that the more familiar markings of today were adopted and have remained the same with just one addition—the penalty arc in 1937—ever since.

All sorts of peculiar arrangements could be made and it was not uncommon to see 12 or 13 players in a side by agreement. The referee often exceeded the time of the match by as much as 15 minutes. It has been said that watches were somewhat inaccurate, but one must also remember that in most matches the home side provided the referee and one umpire. At this time two umpires were on the field of play, each controlling one half, with the referee sitting on the touchline to decide in cases of dispute between them. In 1891 the referee was moved from the touchline onto the field of play with complete control over the match, while umpires were abolished in favour of linesmen.

It was into this very different world that the club which was to become Wycombe Wanderers was born. This handbook tells the story of the development of the club, and of the people who made it all possible—the officials, the players and, of course, the thousands of supporters who have watched "The Blues" over a hundred years.



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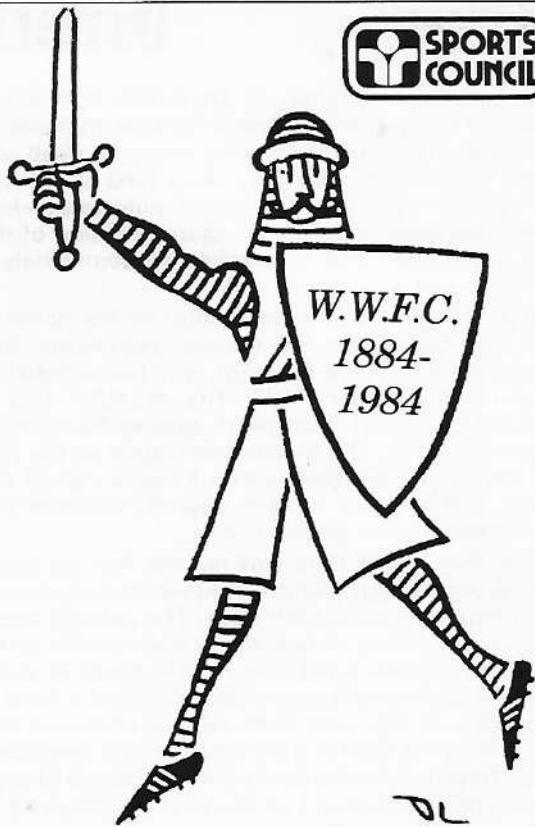


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THE EARLY YEARS

There are no surviving documents covering the early years in the development of the club that was to become Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. Our best information on this period comes from notes left by the late Ted Rolph, a former Vice-Chairman of the Club. In 1958 he discussed the events leading up to the formation of the club with John Randell, the first Wycombe Wanderers goalkeeper, who was then 92 years old and the last surviving member of the original team.

He recalled how in the early 1880s a group of young men living in the Wheelers Field district of the town got together to talk of playing football. Wheelers Field included Duke Street, Slater Street, Totteridge Road, Railway Place, Easton Terrace and Saffron Platt. "Datchett" Webb, whose family lived at 29 Duke Street, got a ball from somewhere and charged the other boys who had left school and were working a penny each to play with it. Most of the lads worked in chair shops, a few in the paper mills, working long hours from early morning to late at night, Saturdays as well.

These youngsters began to learn the rudiments of the game on the Rye Mead. Harry Rolph, who had played for Marlow and was considered to be the best player on the Rye at the time, taught them many skills of the game. So in 1884 they decided to form a club to play against some of the villages.

The first meeting was held in the woodhouse at the rear of the garden to 29 Duke Street. "Datchett" Webb controlled the business which was, as far as we can tell, to force agreement upon the payment of 3d. a week contribution. "Datchett" had a strong

personality, was full of energy and enthusiasm, and played an important part in these early years. No records were kept, but we do know that in 1886 football requisites were purchased from Joe Norton, who had been the Secretary and Captain of Wycombe Rangers F.C. These consisted of two bars, four goalposts, six flagpoles with flags of orange and blue and a ball—all for 18/6d. Joe Norton became the first President of the Wanderers.

In 1887 the players felt they may do well if they went into Junior Football and play against better clubs. They had been playing up until then against scratch elevens from the chair shops or the village green. So a meeting was called by Jim Ray, who was a good writer, and "Datchett" Webb, now the star footballer among them, at the "Steam Engine" public house in Station Road. Billy Dimmock acted as Chairman and the first item on the agenda was the name of the club. Noel Curtis proposed North Town Wanderers—North Town was another name given to the Wheelers Field district. John Randell objected that whilst most of the players came from this area others, like himself, came from different parts of the town. He therefore proposed the name be Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. This was eventually agreed to after a heated discussion. It was also agreed to pay 6d. per week contribution and that the club colours should be the two blues. "Datchett" Webb was elected captain, with Jim Ray as Secretary and George Cook as Treasurer. They also decided to put a challenge in the "Free Press" to all other junior clubs and the first match arranged was against Wycombe Nose F.C. on 14th September, 1887.

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First Cup Match

They also entered for the Wycombe Cup and the first match took place on 21st January, 1888. Their opponents were Wycombe Ramblers, a formidable side who had won the Berks. & Bucks. Junior Cup the previous season. Their Secretary at the time was Charlie Harper, a great player who was later to play an important part in the future of Wycombe Wanderers. The young Wanderers were beaten by 14 goals to nil and the "Free Press" reported:

"The first match in the Wycombe Cup series played on Saturday was little better than a farce, the Ramblers having the easiest possible task to dispose of the very unpractised team who opposed them."

The two teams were as follows; the Ramblers side contained a number of players who later came over to the Wanderers:

Wanderers—J. Randell, goal; (he remembered this game very clearly. He said: "A strong wind was blowing down the pitch, there was nobody behind his goal and he had to run a long way to retrieve the ball every time they scored as there were no nets at the time") E. Webb, J. Hearne, G. Stallwood, E. Ball, J. Putnam, J. Ray, G. Bowles, G. Cook, G. Johnson, —. Grace.

Ramblers—A. W. Heath, G. Beckett, C. W. Harper, O. Ball, F. Free, F. White, W. Stone, F. Biggs, Syd. Morris, F. Moore, T. Thurlow.

The Wanderers used the "Steam Engine" as their headquarters for a year before moving to the "Masons Arms" in Saffron Platt and then to the "Nag's Head", opposite the Rye, where Bill Pearce was the landlord. He saw great possibilities for the club and his work and enthusiasm were to be an important contribution in the move towards senior football.

It was at the "Nag's Head" that a meeting took place in December, 1889. It was disclosed that by entering two teams under different names in the Wycombe Cup each team would be entitled to two representatives on the High Wycombe Football Association, who administered the Wycombe Cup competition. So with absolute secrecy they decided to enter the first team as "Wild West" (W.W.F.C.) and the second team as Wycombe Wanderers. Both sides reached the Semi-Finals. The Wanderers lost to the High Wycombe club by 6-1. In the other Semi-Final Wild West beat Birch's Factory and so qualified to meet High Wycombe in the Final. The match was played on Wright's Meadow, Wycombe Marsh on 15th March, 1890. The game ended in a draw; the re-play was also drawn, but in the third match Wild West won 2-0. The Cup was presented to the inimitable captain "Datchett" Webb who in his speech said that they were glad to have won the Cup for the Wanderers despite the name employed. For years afterwards the winning of the Wycombe Cup in this way caused heated arguments. The Club made application to have the name "Wycombe Wanderers"

inscribed on the Cup; this was refused, the Association stating that the use of the name "Wild West" had hoodwinked them. The following season the club again entered two teams, referring to them as "A" and "B".

Results were beginning to improve and the nucleus of a promising side was beginning to emerge. In season 1890-91 the club reached the Finals of the Berks. & Bucks. Junior Cup and the Wycombe Cup. In the County Cup their opponents were Reading Albion at Maidenhead. The match finished in a 2-2 draw, but the replay ended in a 6-2 win for the Reading side. There was also disappointment in the Wycombe Cup when Marsh defeated the Wanderers by three clear goals.

Tragedy struck in February, 1893 when Frank Howlett, joint Captain, died after receiving concussion after heading a ball.

The Move to Spring Meadow

At the start of the 1893-94 season Charlie Harper was elected as Secretary and Captain, and startling changes began to show. To start with it was decided to rent Spring Meadow to get away from the difficult conditions on the Rye where the Club had no control over crowds and where playing space was limited with fierce competition for a playing pitch. The club enjoyed a successful playing season winning the Wycombe Cup 3-1 against Marlow Reserves and the Maidenhead Charity Cup beating Windsor & Eton Victoria 5-1 in the Final at Maidenhead.

When Charlie Harper arranged a friendly match against Middlesbrough Ironopolis, a professional side, for a £21 guarantee many thought he had gone crazy. But he confounded his critics for 1,600 people paid 6d. each to see the game which the Wanderers lost 0-3. The club was now attracting much attention and some London newspapers began to report on the games at Spring Meadow.

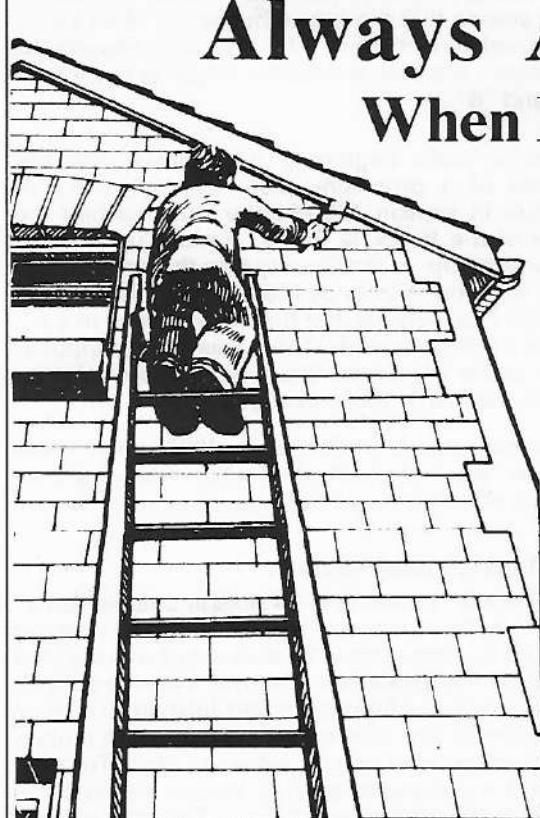
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The Club Adopts Senior Status

In July, 1894 a special meeting was called to discuss the advantages of becoming Seniors. There was some opposition from the players which led to the Chairman, Alderman C. W. Deacon, saying that "should any be against it, he would remind them that there were as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it." This brought a retort from one of the players George Stevens (popularly known as "Bunny"): "Yes Mr. Chairman, but they want a lot of catching". Many felt that the County Junior Cup should be won first, but eventually a proposal that the club should enter the Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup, the F.A. Amateur Cup and the F.A. Cup was overwhelmingly passed. It was also agreed to enter a team in the East Berks. & South Bucks. Junior League. Admission charges were fixed at men 6d., boys 3d., and ladies free.

The first game in the Amateur Cup was against West Herts. at Watford on 10th November, 1894 when the Wanderers were beaten 5-1. In the Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup, Wycombe beat Slough 4-0 away and were drawn away to Wolverton in the Second Round. The match was switched to Spring Meadow following an arrangement between the clubs—a common occurrence at this time. Wycombe offered a guarantee of £12; the "gate" amounted to £21/12/0d., but Wolverton won the match by the odd goal. The club again won the Wycombe Cup beating Maidenhead Norfolkians 5-0 in the Final.

George Stevens became the first Wycombe Wanderers player to represent Berks. & Bucks. at senior level when he played against Kent on 20th February, 1895.

From Spring Meadow to Loakes Park

An attempt was made to purchase a piece of land next to Spring Meadow, but this scheme was abandoned when the price became known—£600 with a further £200 to put in order for playing football. It was then decided to approach Lord Carrington to see if Loakes Park could be rented. An arrangement was reached that no rent would be charged for the first year after which discussions would take place on the terms of the lease.

The first match to be played at Loakes Park was a friendly against Park Grove on 7th September, 1895. The Wanderers team was: J. Ball, H. Turner, A. Hutchinson, F.C. Keen, R. Collier, G. Stevens, F. W. Abbott, W. Buchanan, W. Lloyd, F. G. Jennings, G. Wooster.

Loakes Park in those days was an open space for those who occupied the Abbey as a residence. There were two large fields separated by a fence running from Barracks Road down to a plantation of trees that hid the large gardens and greenhouses used to grow fruit and vegetables for the occupants of the Abbey. There was no Queen Alexandra Road in those days, and the view looking North from the ground showed only the green hills. The surface of the playing pitch was rough and stony with a gradual slope continuing down from Tom Burts Hill. Sheep grazed on it to keep the grass down. The players now changed at the Red Lion Hotel in the High Street although the club continued to use the "Nags Head" as its headquarters.

Season 1895-96 brought a good run in the F.A. Amateur Cup. After wins over Newbury (1-0) and the Scots Fusiliers (9-0) at Loakes Park, the Wanderers were drawn against the East Lancaster Regiment at Aldershot. Here the referee declared the ground unfit, but allowed the match to be played as a friendly which Wycombe won by 3-2. Then, without any application on the part of the Wanderers, the Football Association upheld the result as an official game and the Wanderers went into the "hat" for the First Round Proper. The reward was to be drawn away to Marlow, then a formidable side. The game took place on the old Crown Ground where a record crowd saw Wycombe put up a great show but lose by the odd goal in five.

Into The Southern League

On 21st May, 1896 it was announced that Wycombe Wanderers' application to join the Southern League had been accepted. With the exception of cup matches all games up until then had been friendlies.

The A.G.M. of 1896 heard that receipts in the first season at Loakes Park had been just under £408 compared with £114 at Spring Meadow.

Season 1896-97 saw Wycombe excused the qualifying rounds of the F.A. Amateur Cup and drawn at home to the famous Casuals in the First Round at Loakes Park. The game resulted in a tremendous struggle in front of a good crowd with the Casuals winning the match in extra time by five goals to the Wanderers three.

The club also reached the Final of the Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup for the first time losing to Marlow by 1-2.

Team: J. Ball, A. W. Keen, Rev. A. G. P. Baines, F. C. Keen, R. Collier, G. Stevens, A. Green, J. H. Davies, F. G. Jennings, W. Buchanan, F. W. Abbott.

In August, 1897 it was reported that the President, R. S. Wood, had met Lord Carrington and an agreement had been reached to lease the ground for 14 years. It was now accepted that the headquarters must be changed and a small deputation called on Bill Pearce of the "Nag's Head" who had done so much for the club to explain the reason for the move. The Swan Hotel in Pauls Row was selected as the new headquarters. It was also decided to appoint a groundsman and Bill Trinder was the first person to occupy this important position. He did not stay with the club very long but certainly brought about some changes. He had no mowing machines and cut the grass with a scythe. Both ends of the playing pitch became very muddy and marking out was a difficult process because before a match started players and spectators alike would kick the ball about right up to kick-off. The same thing would happen at half-time. The following season this was stopped, and the players, who walked to the ground from the Swan Hotel, could practice without interference.

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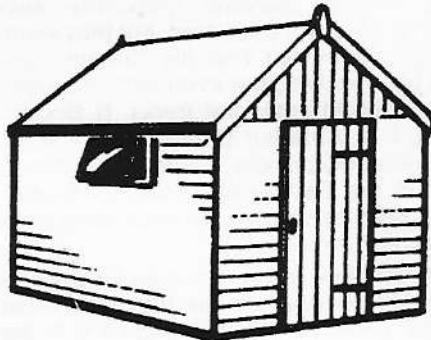
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Following a disturbance during a Southern League fixture against Portsmouth R.A., Loakes Park was closed for one week by F.A. ruling. The Portsmouth goalkeeper was suspended for two weeks after striking a spectator. Crowd disturbances and attacks on referees were not uncommon in those days.

Another fine run in the F.A. Amateur Cup gave Wycombe the chance to win the Cup in only their third season as seniors. On 29th January, 1898 they played the Old Westminsters at Richmond. Wanderers won 5-0, but before the start of the game they had protested that the crossbar at one end was 8½ inches short while the other was 5½ inches short from the ground. The Coldstream Guards were beaten 3-1 in the next round. Playing in the Quarter Finals at Uxbridge, Wycombe scored to equalise just on time. The draw for the Semi-Finals was made before the replay took place and so it read: Uxbridge or Wycombe Wanderers v Old Malvernians, match to be played at the Crown Ground, Marlow. But it was not to be; Uxbridge won the replay 4-2 at Loakes Park to shock the whole of Wycombe.

In June, 1898, F. W. Abbott, captain, joined the Metropolitan Police. This was a great blow to local football—he was a fine player and had been selected several times to play for the Counties. He later became Deputy Commissioner of the London Police.

Many friendlies had to be arranged to occupy empty Saturdays and make up a full season of football. It was felt that a local league might hold more interest, so Wycombe joined first the Bucks. and Contiguous League and then the Berks. & Bucks. Senior League but neither were successful and were soon abandoned.



WYCOMBE WANDERERS—1898-99

Back Row—Geo. Horwood, C. W. Harper (Secretary), E. Wheeler, H. Turner, Geo. Plumridge, G. T. Miles (Treasurer). Centre Row—F. C. Keen (Captain), R. White, R. Collier, W. Buchanan, G. Stevens (Vice-Captain). Front Row—A. Green, A. W. Keen, F. G. Jennings, J. Aldridge.



A view of Loakes Park during work on levelling the pitch in 1900

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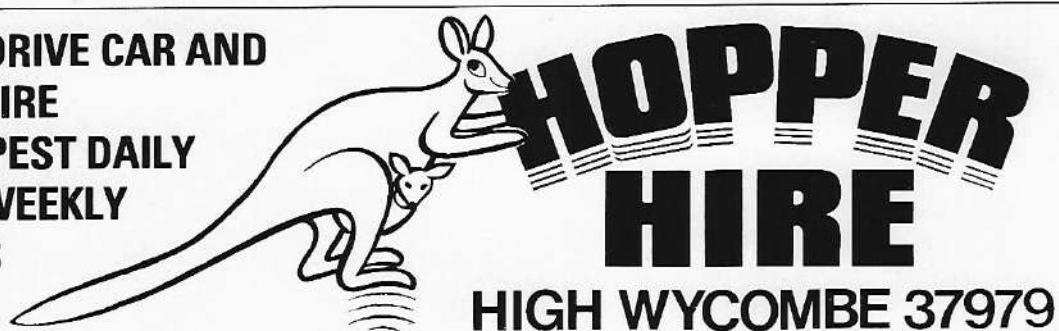
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Season 1899-1900 was to be historic in many ways. At the end of the previous season it had been decided to level the pitch. The contractor had advised that the work would be done quickly and without much interference to matches. An approach was made to the military authorities for permission to play on the Barrack Meadow directly opposite Loakes Park while the work was being carried out. But in October the club received a shock when they were informed that there could be no charge for admission to games played on the Barrack Meadow. Once again Lord Carrington was approached who offered the Wycombe Abbey Park free of rent. This raised another problem for the club as His Lordship would not allow the normal entrance to be used. Instead a bridge would have to be constructed across The Dyke from The Rye. This was built in less than a week, a tressle bridge made from soft timber which stood until after the First World War.

Again Wycombe reached the Final of the County Cup and once again their opponents were Marlow. The match was played at Maidenhead on Saturday, 14th April, 1900 and ended in a 1-1 draw after a very clean game. The replay took place on the following Saturday at Maidenhead, and this proved to be a very different game. Following the referee's decision to disallow a "goal" for Marlow both E. Shaw (captain) and H. G. White (goalkeeper) of the Marlow team were leaving the pitch in protest when Mr. R. A. Lunnon, President of the Berks. & Bucks. Football Council, came on to persuade them to carry on playing. The game was stopped for a considerable time with Wycombe leading 2-1. Eventually the players were persuaded to continue and right on full-time Wheeler in the Wycombe goal caught the ball but was slow in clearing and was bundled over the line still holding the ball to make the score 2-2.

A touchline meeting was called between the officials of the County F.A. and the representatives of the two clubs to discuss the playing of extra time. The argument became heated but the County officials insisted that extra time be played. The light was bad and it was clear that play could not continue for long. A ding-dong struggle developed with Marlow scoring twice and Wycombe once. At 7.35 p.m. when the spectators had struck matches all around the ground, the ball was kicked onto the railway embankment and could not be found. The referee abandoned the match with seven minutes left to play and Marlow leading by four goals to three.

The Berks. & Bucks. F.A. came to a curious decision that the seven minutes remaining should be played the following Friday at Maidenhead. It was alleged that had Wycombe Wanderers gone out to play extra time immediately after the completion of normal time there would have been ample time to complete the additional period. The Wanderers said in reply that had it not been for the President of the Association going onto the field to stop the two Marlow men from coming off there would have been no interference with play and the normal time would have been completed without interruption. The Wanderers demanded another hearing but although arrangements for playing the seven minutes

were postponed this did not satisfy Wycombe who refused to play the additional time. The Cup was awarded to Marlow with the score standing when the match was abandoned.

This remarkable series of events was talked about for many years afterwards. It was the last occasion that Marlow won the County Cup. The Wanderers did not enter the competition the following season which resulted in the County Association changing its rules to require all affiliated clubs to enter the County tournament.

Team: E. Wheeler, W. J. M. Probert, C. Buchanan, F. C. Keen, A. W. Keen, G. Stevens, A. Green, W. White, E. Carter, W. Buchanan, T. Barlow.

Wycombe continued to play at Daws Hill Park for the 1900-01 season before returning to the newly levelled Loakes Park the following season. The first match played was a friendly against a combined Marlow/Maidenhead team led by Ted Shaw, the Marlow captain. It was hoped this would help overcome any bad feelings left by the incidents of the 1900 County Cup final.

Wycombe Win First Senior Trophy

In 1901-02 Wycombe won their first Senior trophy by winning the Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup against Slough at Maidenhead by 3-0. All the goals were scored by F. W. ("Sonny") Rouse, an opportunist centre-forward who became the first player from the club to go professional joining Grimsby and later playing for Stoke, Everton, Chelsea and W.B.A.

The match was watched by a crowd of 7,752 and there were emotional scenes at High Wycombe Railway Station where thousands had gathered to welcome the team and the Cup. The celebrations lasted for several days as the Cup was taken around many of the local hosteries.

In 1902-03 the Southern League had shrunk to only six clubs following the departure of amateur sides Maidenhead, Shepherds Bush and West Hampstead. To combat this it was decided that with effect from 1903-04 Division One clubs in the league could enter a reserve side in Division Two.

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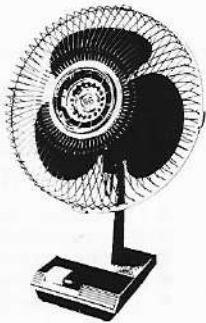
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A match in progress at Loakes Park in April, 1903

The First Stand

In 1903 the first Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup final was played at Loakes Park between Aylesbury United and Slough, the latter winning 3-0. A crowd of 6,000 watched the match with a further 1,000 viewing free from Tom Burts Hill. For many years this "free gallery" had been a problem for the club and in October, 1903 Mr. Harry Browning of the Red Lion Hotel initiated a scheme to build a stand on the upper side of Loakes Park. Mr. Thomas Thurlow submitted plans to erect a pavilion costing £400 and a meeting of supporters resolved that shares of £1 each be issued with 4% interest to be paid until such time that the invested money be repaid to the shareholders. Holders of 10 shares to have free use of the Pavilion until such time as it became the property absolute of Wycombe Wanderers. The building was to be 150 feet long with four tiers capable of accommodating 400 people. There were to be dressing rooms at each end, the room at the eastern end to be ornamented with a thatched roof to blend with the character of the district. A tender from H. Flint, builder from Easton Street, was accepted and work began on 11th November, 1903. The work proceeded at a rapid pace and the new stand was ready by 9th January, 1904 when Southampton Reserves were the visitors in the Southern League.

In 1904-05 following the departure of Chesham Town and the decision by Southall to turn professional, Wycombe Wanderers found themselves the only amateur team in the Southern League. Results continued to be disappointing and the club finished second from bottom in the table.

One of the worst accidents ever to happen at Loakes Park occurred in November, 1905 during a Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup First Round match against Chesham Generals when the Chesham right back, A. Bone, broke his leg which was later amputated. A benefit match was played and Wycombe Wanderers paid for the player's twelve weeks board in hospital.

Another unusual story from this season came in January, 1906 when Fulham Reserves visited Wycombe during the General Election campaign of that year. Both political parties were keen to be represented at the match and arrangements were made that Mr. Seddon Cripps, Tory, would start the match by kicking-off and Mr. Arnold Herbert, Liberal, would re-start the second half. Herbert eventually won the seat.

Poor results continued in the Southern League and the Wanderers finished bottom of the table in three consecutive seasons between 1906 and 1908. Season 1907-08 was a particularly gloomy time with Wycombe losing their first 13 league matches and managing only one win and one draw all season. It was really no surprise when the club decided to withdraw from the Southern League and join the Great Western Suburban League.

The A.G.M. of July, 1908 received with sadness the resignation of Charlie Harper, Secretary, who had seen the club rise from juniors as a player, captain and administrator. It was accepted that his position as a schoolmaster in London made it impossible for him to continue. His contribution to the club and to local football had been tremendous. Born in Hereford in 1862 he moved to High Wycombe to teach at the Priory Road school. He played for three leading local clubs—Wycombe Alexander, Wycombe Ramblers and the High Wycombe club—before joining the Wanderers. He got the club away from the Rye and pushed for the adoption of senior status. He was also a good cricketer and played for many years for High Wycombe C.C.

At the start of the 1908-09 season it was reported that Tom Gilson, who had played for Aston Villa, Brentford and Bristol City, was interested in playing for Wycombe as a re-instated amateur. He was to make an important contribution to the skill and sportsmanship of the club before he tragically died of cancer in February, 1912, aged 30.

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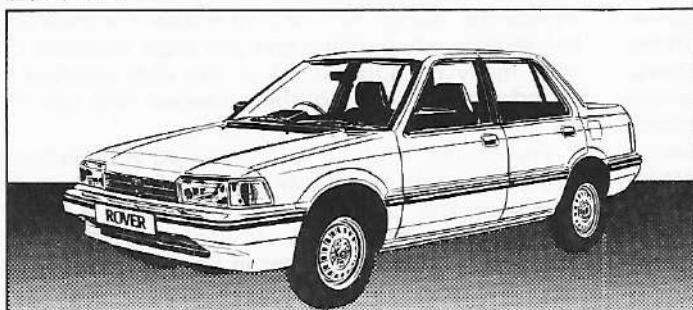
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Wycombe recorded their second win in the County Cup in 1909 when they defeated Chesham Town 3-0 at Marlow. They had won the Cup without conceding a goal. The Cup came to Wycombe twice more before the First World War. In 1910 Wokingham Athletic were beaten 3-0 after a replay, and in 1913 Maidenhead Norfolkians lost to Wycombe, also after a replay.

Season 1909-10 saw Wycombe record their highest ever win when Staines were beaten 18-1 on 27th December in the Great Western Suburban League.

On 31st December, 1910 the club set off on their first ever tour. A party of 16 visited Guernsey, stopping en route at Weymouth to play the local side who beat the Wanderers 3-2. One match was played against Guernsey which resulted in a 1-1 draw.

The First World War

Just before the outbreak of the First World War, Wycombe heard that their application to join the Spartan League had been accepted. Their intention was to continue in membership of the Great Western Suburban League and to run two sides of equal status—an idea the Wanderers had toyed with since the Wild West days of the 1890s. The fixture lists for 1914-15 were published but the season never got underway with players being called away on active service. Loakes Park was used by the military authorities for training purposes and the football club ceased to operate for the duration of the war.

In 1919 with men returning home after the ending of hostilities George Miles, Chairman and Treasurer, convened a meeting to examine the possibilities of arranging matches. There were many difficulties—football gear had been loaned to the military authorities and in some cases sent abroad—but a number of friendlies were arranged during the spring of 1919.

Spartan League Champions

The new season started with the club entering teams in both the Spartan League and the Great Western Suburban League. In March, 1920 the Wanderers played Chesham United at Aylesbury in the final of the Bucks Charity Cup. A crowd of 5,000 watched the game which was abandoned eight minutes from time with Chesham leading by the only goal scored. The referee had ordered Wycombe's Archie Gomm off the field following a foul and the crowd had shown its disapproval by invading the pitch. The Cup was awarded to Chesham United. This was to be Archie Gomm's last appearance in a Wycombe shirt; he joined Millwall as one of the first stopper centre-half players. He spent eleven seasons at the Den before moving to Carlisle in 1932.

The Wanderers became Spartan League champions having lost only once and having scored 114 goals and conceded only 24 in 20 matches. They successfully defended their title in similar form the following season—again only one defeat was recorded with the side scoring 108 goals and conceding 29 in 22 matches. The club also won the Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup for the fifth time beating Slough at Reading before a crowd of 9,875. Captain of the

side at this time was Frank Adams and the players included Reg Boreham, Klon Smith, Joey Grace and Billy O'Gorman. In March, 1921 there was much rejoicing when it became known that Wycombe along with Wimbledon had been accepted for membership of the Isthmian League. In their first season the club finished in eighth place with 26 points from 26 matches. The reserves finished in sixth place.

During the season Reg Boreham became the first Wycombe Wanderers player to win an Amateur International cap when he played for England against Ireland at Leicester on 14th November, 1921. England won the match 4-1. He also played in the England side that beat Wales 7-0 at Swansea in January, 1922. He was later to join Arsenal playing an important part in saving them from relegation before returning to Loakes Park in 1923-24. He continued playing for the Wanderers until his early retirement from the game in 1927. He later served the club as Secretary from 1936 to 1949.

The President, the Marquis of Lincolnshire, presented a cup to be known as the Wycombe Memorial Hospital Cup to be played for each season with the gate receipts to be handed over to the hospital. The first club to play for the cup was Tufnell Park in May, 1922 when the Wanderers won 4-1. The fixture established itself as an end-of-season attraction with many teams visiting Loakes Park by invitation between 1922 and 1970.

In December, 1922 work started on the extensions to either side of the stand, the money being raised by loan. Six weeks later the work was complete and on 20th January, 1923 the stand as we see it today was opened on the occasion of the visit of St. Albans for an Amateur Cup Second Round match. A large crowd saw Wycombe miss many scoring chances that day to lose 1-2. It is interesting to note that the match was filmed and later shown at the newly opened Palace Cinema in Frogmore.

The Berks. & Bucks. Senior Cup was won for the sixth time when the Wanderers overcame Maidenhead United 4-0 at Slough in front of a crowd of 11,500. At the end of the season a tour of France was arranged with matches against The Olympic F.C. Paris (won 3-0), Cette F.C. (lost 3-4) and Bordeaux (drew 3-3). News of an accident to the touring party reached Wycombe but a telegram was soon received saying that apart from a few cuts and bruises all was well.

In August, 1923 A. W. Fryer toured Sweden with the Middlesex Wanderers, and it is thought he was the first of many players to be selected from the Wycombe club.

At the start of the 1923-24 season new dressing rooms were opened at Loakes Park. The Wanderers enjoyed an excellent start in the Isthmian League and soon recorded high scoring wins over Woking (away 6-1), Ilford (away 8-1) and St. Albans (home 9-1). Timmy Hinton in particular was unstoppable scoring four hat-tricks and one four in the first seven matches. The Blues ended the season as the league's top scorers but could only manage fourth place.

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Joey Grace played for Wales against England at Llandudno on 22nd March, 1924.

The Reserves won the Berks. & Bucks. Junior Cup by beating Datchett 2-0 in the final played at Maidenhead. This was the only time that the trophy was won by the club.

In 1924-25 Wycombe again battled through to the final of the County Cup meeting Windsor & Eton at Reading. A crowd of 10,504 paid £618 to watch the match which ended in a goalless draw with Timmy Hinton missing a penalty. Wycombe won the replay 2-0 at the Dolphin, Slough with Timmy Hinton and Reg Boreham the scorers. By a strange coincidence Wycombe were drawn at home to Windsor & Eton in the First Round the following season when the Royalists won by 7-2. Wycombe's goals were scored by Hinton and Boreham.

The Wycombe Hospital Cup was jointly held by Wycombe Wanderers and London Caledonians after an extraordinary match lasting 2½ hours failed to produce a result.

At the club A.G.M. in July, 1925 it was announced that B. C. ("Bunny") Hooper had resigned as Secretary as he was leaving the district. He had given 27 years loyal service to the club and was made a life member. Mr. Walter Howland was elected to the post.

The 1925-26 season again saw Wycombe finish as top goalscorers in the Isthmian League yet finish in fourth position. In 26 league matches Wycombe scored 97 goals but conceded 83. At the end of the season Timmy Hinton signed for Millwall. He was a prolific goal-scorer and his 58 goals in 36 matches in 1925-26 stood as a club record for many years.

In 1926 G. T. Miles resigned as Treasurer. He had held the position since 1898, a period of 28 years. Mr. G. R. Bunce was elected in his place and acted as Treasurer for 37 years.

The team again showed signs of instability and crashed out of the F.A. Cup at Slough losing 0-9. In the league St. Albans also scored nine goals without response from the Wanderers—the club's worst defeat in the Isthmian League.

In 1928 the President, the Marquis of Lincolnshire, died. He had done much for the club. For business reasons Mr. W. Howland resigned as Secretary, handing over to Mr. R. J. Gardner. Mr. Howland continued to serve on the Committee until 1954.

The 1928-29 season opened with an 11-1 win over Henley Town in the F.A. Cup with Bill Brown scoring eight times.

At the A.G.M. of 1929 the deeds of a recreation room at Loakes Park were handed to the President by Mr. Harry Garland on behalf of the Supporters Club. This was the first instance of the valuable assistance that the Supporters Club were to give to the football club over many years.

The 1929-30 season was disappointing with the Wanderers unable to record an away win in the league all season and being removed from all of the Cup competitions at the first hurdle. But the club did enjoy a successful tour of Germany in April, 1930 with matches against Marburg (won 6-2), S. V. Waldhof (lost 4-5) and Fulda (won 7-0).

Wycombe Win The Amateur Cup

The highlight of the long history of the club came in season 1930-31 with the winning of the Amateur Cup. But few had fancied Wycombe's chances when they were drawn away to London Caledonians in the First Round. The Calies were a strong side but the Wycombe men won 4-1. Drawn at home to Walthamstow Avenue in the next round, the Blues produced a brilliant first half display to lead 5-1 at the interval and went on to win 6-2 with goals by Tapping (4) and Brown (2). The Third Round took Wycombe to Imber Court to play the Metropolitan Police. The match ended 1-1 after extra time and a large crowd of 10,881 packed Loakes Park for the replay. The Police scored first but Braisher equalised to make the score 1-1 at half-time. Ten minutes after the restart Vernon scored the winner and so Wycombe passed into the Semi-Finals for the first time in their history.

They were drawn to play Woking at Ilford. The match was one of missed chances and Woking could have been two goals ahead by half-time. As it was the score at the interval was 0-0 and with the wind behind them in the second half the Wanderers forwards began to trouble the Woking defence. After six minutes Britnell scored with a header, and five minutes later Brown added a second. Ten minutes from time Britnell scored a fluke goal to make the final score 3-0 to Wycombe—a scoreline that did not accurately reflect the evenness of the game.

Wycombe's opponents in the Final were Hayes. They had reached this stage by battling through from the qualifying rounds winning eight matches, all away from home. The match was played at Highbury on 11th April, 1931. The crowd was 32,489 including thousands who had travelled from High Wycombe by train. Wycombe supporters sported the two blues and wore beautiful miniature chairs made to scale on the lapels of their jackets.



Action from the 1931 Amateur Cup Final at Highbury

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Hayes started as strong favourites. Their side included a number of experienced players although they were forced to make a number of last-minute changes. One of these was to bring in the old Dulwich Hamlet half-back W. C. Caesar; this late introduction was to have a vital and, from a Hayes point of view, a tragic influence on the result.

Hayes won the toss. In the early part of the game Sid Crump was injured and forced to leave the field with Wycombe reduced to ten men for most of the first half. In the second half with Crump back in his usual position Wycombe began to force their opponents back. Time after time they got right up to the Hayes goal but could not take advantage.

Then in a goalmouth scramble a shot from Bill Brown hit the upright and as the ball bounced away Caesar handled. As Brown walked back to take the resulting spot-kick the crowd were silent. A tight ring of players were bunched around the penalty box. Brown aimed high and hard but Holding, the Hayes "keeper", punched the ball away. But Alf Britnell was following up and his shot flew into the top right-hand corner to give Wycombe the lead. Hayes

never gave up and when the final whistle sounded they were still attacking the Wycombe goal. Thousands turned out to welcome the team home. The players and officials went to the Guildhall and a crowd of 10,000 clamoured for Pat Badrick to hold the Cup for all to see. The club received hundreds of telegrams of congratulation. John Timberlake, the captain of the side who had been unable to play because of injury, received a special medal struck for him by F.A. ruling.

Team: J. E. Kipping, S. Crump, R. S. Cox, F. Rance, L. R. Badrick, A. Greenwell, C. Simmons, W. Brown, D. S. Vernon, F. C. Braisher, A. J. Britnell.

On 2nd May, 1931 Wycombe completed their Isthmian League fixtures by playing two matches on the same day. Their opponents were Kingstonian and arrangements were made to play at Kingston at 3 o'clock with the return match at Loakes Park at 6.30. Wycombe made only one change for the evening match, while Kingstonian made two changes. Kingstonian won the first match 2-0 while Wycombe won the evening game 4-0.



WYCOMBE WANDERERS F.C.—1930-31

Front Row: A. Grace (Asst. Trainer), E. Mines, L. R. Badrick (Vice-Captain), A. Greenwell, F. Adams, H. Goodearl. Second Row: R. Spatchett, W. J. Winter-Taylor, W. R. Butler, C. Simmons, W. Brown, D. S. Vernon, F. C. Braisher, A. T. Britnell, G. T. Miles (President), Dr. J. T. Bell, C. A. Abbott. Third Row: G. Payne, R. Howland, G. R. Bunce (Hon. Treasurer), G. Harris (Trainer/Coach), F. C. Rance, S. Crump, J. E. Kipping, R. S. Cox, J. Timberlake (Captain), R. J. Gardner (Hon. General Secretary), W. Howland (Hon. Financial Secretary), E. Burton. Fourth Row: C. Tilbury (Groundsman), C. Mitchell, W. O'Gorman, H. Norman, T. H. Smith, S. W. Cubbage, C. Allen, E. T. Barrington, G. Barnes, F. Boreham.



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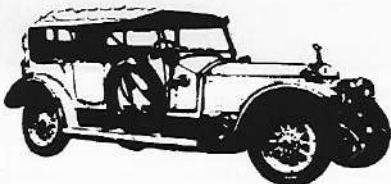
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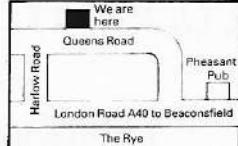
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